

John T and Edna Hill Lee Family

The John Thompson Lee Sr. family was one of the first to come to the Lepanto area in the early 1900's. Mr. Lee, the son of B.F. Lee was born October 9, 1879 in Arkabutla Tate County AR. His family soon moved to White County and later to Evadale Mississippi County AR. There he met Edna Hill. Known to her family and friends has "Mur". She was born December 29, 1882. Her parents Mr. & Mrs Edmund B. Hill died when she was 6 and she was raised by her aunt & uncle Mr & Mrs J.R. Riddle.

J.T. & Edna wed December 14, 1902.

On their 50th wedding anniversary, Esther Bindursky of the Lepanto News Record wrote an article which follows in part:

The first store & cotton gin in Lepanto that Mr. Lee operated was owned by H.S. Portis, brother-in-law of Mr. Lee and Mr. Steve Ralph, the uncle of Mr. Lee. Mr. Lee ran the store and gin and then went in business for himself. In 1913, Mr. Lee sold the store and gin to Dan Portis Sr. During the formative years in Lepanto, Mr. Lee donated land for the erection of the first bank and served as President for many years. He had found time in connection with his farming operations to serve as president of the school board when the first brick building was erected in 1913. He was also Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge, a member of the town council and the local postmaster. They helped to organize the First Baptist Church and were charter members. Mr. Lee's word was always his bond. Mrs. Lee had one brother E.B. Hill of Concrete WA and Mr. Lee had one brother, F.M. Lee of Lepanto.

The Lee's 4 children were: Thelma Lee Smith (Elbert), Grace Hill Lee (J.P.) , J.T. Lee Jr. (Florine) and Mary Eleanor Lee Tyer (Block).

(1) Thelma born December 15, 1904 married Elbert Smith September 2, 1923 and had 4 children: Jerry, Virginia Smith Roberts, M.G. and Gary. . He was a Mason and a Shriner. Mrs. Smith loved music and held a degree from Ouachita Baptist College. After Mr. Smith's death in 1955, Thelma became the music teacher for the Lepanto Elementary School. She received a teaching degree from AR State, studied music and organ at Memphis State and took private organ lessons in Osceola. She passed away May 26, 1990 and is buried in Potter Memorial Cemetery Lepanto Poinsett County AR.

(2) Grace Hill Lee born January 15, 1908 married John Page Holiman Sr. and raised 2 sons John Page "Johnny" Holiman and Charles Edward Holiman. She lived in Lepanto until 1972 and then moved to Gideon MO. She passed away November 20, 1974 and is buried beside her husband in Potter Memorial Cemetery Lepanto Poinsett County AR.

(3) John Thompson Lee Jr. was born in Lepanto Poinsett County AR May 19, 1908. He spent most of his life in and near Lepanto before moving to TN where he died. J.T. had 2 daughters Mary Jo and Martha Gene Lee by his first wife. They lost a son J.T. Lee III born and died 1938. He later married Florine Crecelius of Keiser Mississippi County AR. They had 2 daughters, Ann and Salley Lee. He passed away in 1976 and is buried in Potter Memorial Cemetery, Lepanto Poinsett County AR.

(4) Mary Eleanor Lee "Billie" was born September 17, 1912 and died June 23, 1947 at the age of 35. She married Block Tyer of Wynne AR and had 2 sons, Bill & David Tyer.

Mr. Lee passed away in 1954 and Mrs. Lee in 1970. They are buried in Potter Memorial Cemetery Lepanto Poinsett County AR.

Written by Charles Holiman ~ Lee's grandson for the Poinsett County AR History and Families

Submitted by
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